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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00
ERDA-05 NEA-10 /103 W
----------251332Z 036954 /42
R 251051Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3784
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
INFO USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 2460

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SP, NO
SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN VISIT TO SPAIN

REF: COPENHAGEN 2956

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE NORWEGIAN MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR RECENTLY COMPLETED AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SPAIN. IT WAS THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL GON VISIT TO SPAIN SINCE FRANCO'S DEATH AND WAS UNDERTAKEN AT THE NORWEGIANS' SUGGESTION. THE VISIT'S IMPORTANCE, ACCORDING TO GON, WAS PRIMARILY ITS POLITICAL SIGNAL TO THE SPANISH THAT THE NORWEGIANS ARE PREPARED TO RESUME AN OFFICIAL DIALOGUE WITH THE SPANISH AFTER A HIATUS OF ABOUT FOUR DECADES. END SUMMARY.

2. NORWEGIAN MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR THORBJORN CHRISTIANSEN RECENTLY PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO MADRID. HE BRIEFED DCM
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ON THE VISIT MAY 24.

3. CHRISTIANSEN SAID THAT, CONTRARY TO THE IMPRESSION GIVEN IN THE OSLO PRESS, THE IMMEDIATE IMPETUS FOR HIS VISIT CAME FROM THE NORWEGIAN SIDE NOT FROM THE SPANIARDS. IT WAS INTENDED BY THE GON AS "A SIGNAL THAT WE ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS" FOR TALKS WITH POST-FRANCO SPAIN. INDEED, CHRISTIANSEN FRANKLY FELT

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THAT THE VISIT MIGHT HAVE HAD MORE SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE NORWEGIANS THAN IT DID FOR THE SPANISH, GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE SPANISH HAD ALREADY RECEIVED HIGHER LEVEL DELEGATIONS FROM SWEDEN AND DENMARK.

4. CHRISTIANSEN HAD A SERIES OF TALKS WITH THE SPANISH DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR WESTERN EUROPE ON A VARIETY OF EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL ISSUES. THE SPANISH EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR DETENTE AND AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN CSCE, EXPECIALLY CBMS (A SUBJECT DEAR TO NORWEGIAN HEARTS). THEY ALSO WERE OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN APPLYING FOR EC MEMBERSHIP WHICH THEY SAW AS THE FIRST STEP TO THEIR REINTEGRATION INTO EUROPE.

5. CHRISTIANSEN NOTED THAT AS FAR AS THE SPANISH WERE CONCERED EVENTUAL SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO WAS "NOT A FOREGONE CONCLUSION" THE NORWEGIANS HEARD FROM THEIR SPANISH HOSTS THAT THERE ARE ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON WITHIN SPAIN, INCLUDING A DESIRE ON THE PART OF SOME TO RETURN SPAIN TO HER HISTORIC NEUTRALITY. IN ANY CASE, THE SPANISH MADE IT CLEAR TO THE NORWEGIANS THAT THEY "WOULD NOT COME HAT IN HAND" TO ASK FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP. AND, ACCORDING TO CHRISTIANSEN, THE SPANISH SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN NORWAY'S SPECIAL SECUIRYT POLICIES SINCE THESE SHOWED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENNT WAYS TO JOIN NATO. (NOTE: NORWAY, AS A MATTER OF UNILATERAL NATIONAL POLICY, DOES NOT ALLOW THE STATIONING OF FOREIGN TROOPS NOR THE STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON NORWEGIAN SOIL DURING PEACETIME).

6. THE SPANISH ALSO SHOWED A CONSIDERABLE PREOCCUPATION WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN DURING THEIR BILATERAL TALKS WITH CHRISTIANSEN.
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THEY BRIEFED THE NORWEGIANS ON THE SAHARA PROBLEM, WHICH THEY EXPECTED MIGHT WORSEN AGAIN; THEY SHOWED INTEREST IN IMPROVING THEIR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, BUT PROBABLY NOT UNTIL SOME PROGRESS IS MADE ON A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, AND THEY EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO FIT THE MEDITERRANEAN INTO CSCE MORE CONCRETELY.

7. CHRISTIANSEN DID NOT DISCUSS INTERNAL SPANISH POLITICS EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF MEETING HE HAD WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THE MINISTER GAVE HIM AN UPBEAT PRESENTATION ON THE PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRATIZATION AND NOTED THAT AFTER THE ELECTIONS, THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WILL FACE A DIFFICULT AND COMPLETE AGENDA ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES.

8. THE NORWEGIANS HOPE THAT THE CHRISTIANSEN VISIT WILL BE THE FIRST OF A REGULAR SERIES OF POLITICAL DIRECTOR LEVEL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SPANISH. CHRISTIANSEN'S COUNTERPART HAS BEEN INVITED TO OSLO THIS FALL. MOREOVER, THE MFA BELIEVES THAT ITS DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, TORE BOGH, WILL SOON BE ABLE TO VISIT MADRID TO DISCUSS BILATERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES AND THEREBY

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DEEPEN THE RENEWED DIALOGUE.

9. COMMENT: THE VISIT, THOUGH LOWER LEVEL THAN THOSE OF NORWAY'S NORDIC NEIGHBORS, IS A SMALL STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF RESTORING BALANCE TO NORWAY'S OFTEN STRAINED RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. AND, WE SHARE CHRISTIANSEN'S ASSESSMENT THAT ITS SIGNIFICANCE LIES MAINLY IN ITS SYMBOLIC VALUE -- PERHAPS AS MUCH TO THE NORWEGIAN PEOPLE AS TO THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT.
ANDERS

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